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**Breaking Writer's Block**

**By Lisa Hood**

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Breaking Writer's Block

The most fearsome enemy to any writer, attacking without warning, without prejudice and without compassion, is (gasp, dare I say it?) WRITER'S BLOCK.

I feel a bit like Harry Potter speaking Voldermort's name aloud to the horror of his fellow witches and wizards.

Writer's Block is a curse to creativity. It's as if all the characters and situations and what if scenarios, which normally ricochet around your brain have been sucked into a worm hole leaving only a void behind. It's painful, it's frightening and it's self inflicted!

Writer's Block is the residue of fear. For me, it is the fear of not being good enough. For you it may be fear of exposing yourself to criticism, fear of rejection, fear of humiliation, fear of failure, fear of success, the list could go on and on. Regardless of the fear that keeps you its prisoner, Writer's Block is your prison.

It's time to conquer your fear and get back to the business of writing.

Begin by identifying what is holding you back. As I said, I'm afraid of not being good enough. To counter this, I use a technique called free writing. I think about a situation and then write continuously for ten minutes, without stopping, without censoring any word or phrase or thought. Knowing that mistakes are acceptable, that the objective of this exercise is quantity not quality frees me from my prison.

Use every opportunity to write. If you have stalled on a novel, write a short story, an article, a poem, write in your journal, write a description of the checker at the grocery store, give her a name, a bio, a life...The idea is: JUST WRITE. I stall when editing. Sometimes I just can't look at the story any more. I get so frustrated, I just want to chuck the whole thing and start over. At times like this, it's better for me to turn my attention to a short story or write an article. Before I know it, I'm relaxed and confident.

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Last, but not least, READ. Reading a good book always inspires me. Imagine if JRR Tolkien let fear stop him from writing. What the world would be missing! Every book is full of lessons you can apply to your craft. You can read a book and see the way a particular writer develops characters, overcomes obstacles or weaves their words. You may find tools to use and traps to avoid in your own work.

Lisa Hood is the author of "Shades of Betrayal" and "Shades of Revenge". She has been writing for over 10 years and is presently working on her third suspense novel, "Shades of Jealousy." She is also the Talent Liaison @ BOOKJOBBER.com. Other articles by Lisa Hood can be downloaded from

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### **Thawing Your Writer's Block**

**By Mary Anne Hahn**

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When I go through bouts of writer's block, my fingers stiffen, and my brain goes as blank as the snowy screen of a television on the fritz.

I don't know about you, but I picture writer's block as something cold—like the frozen engine of a car in the dead of winter, or the way your PC sometimes "freezes up" on you when your system gets too busy.

Looking at it that way actually helps to overcome it. Rather than feeling like you are grasping at fog, visualizing writer's block as something three-dimensional can provide you with both the strength to confront it, and the weapons to conquer it.

How can you thaw your writer's block of ice? Try any or all of the following:

1. Chip away at it. No need to write "War and Peace" in one sitting; Tolstoy certainly didn't. Fifteen minutes a day are all you need to give your writing dream some life and structure. Use them to write anything, anything at all—as many article ideas as you can think of, a synopsis of a story idea, a climactic scene in your novel, a limerick, a character sketch, step by step instructions for making the perfect omelet or what you would do if you won the lottery.

Have some fun with these 15-minute exercises, and you'll probably

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rediscover the truth in the adage that "time flies" when you do.

2. Light a match to it. By this I mean, don't think about the fact that you are not currently writing; rather, think about why you ever wanted to be a writer in the first place. Better yet, *\*write\** about why you want to be a writer. Do you have stories burning inside you that need to be told? Or do you see writing as your key to personal fulfillment or freedom? Melt away writer's block by reigniting your passion for writing—the old daydreams, the past feelings of triumph or accomplishment when you finished a piece of work.

3. Carve a sculpture out of it. If you simply can't break it down or melt it away, make something from your writer's block of ice. As I did above, write about how you feel when you experience writer's

block, or what you think writer's block looks like. Maybe look for humor in it ("What did one writer's block say to the other?" "Nothing—it couldn't find the right words!" Okay, that's a bit lame, but you get the idea).

Whenever writer's block tries to come between you and your writing aspirations, don't try to avoid it. Instead, face it head on. Play with it, laugh at it, scoff at it, or befriend it. Make it something that you can take into your hands and deal with.

Turn it into one more tool that you can use to achieve your writing success.

Mary Anne Hahn is editor and publisher of "WriteSuccess," THE biweekly ezine of ideas, information and inspiration for writers. To subscribe, <mailto:writesuccess-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>



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